

The

MESSENGER



of OUR LADY OF AFRICA

Volume 10

JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1952

Number 7

THE CONGREGATION OF THE
MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA
(White Sisters)

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa was founded in 1869 by Cardinal Lavigerie to aid the White Fathers in Christianizing the Mohammedan and pagan women of Africa and through their means conquer the family and society. The Sisters cooperate with the White Fathers in all kinds of catechetical, medical and educational works in 143 missions scattered over the vast African Continent.

Though there are 1700 White Sisters, the number is far from being sufficient to cope with the present day needs of our missions. Sisters are needed to staff more catechetical classes, grammar, high and normal schools, as well as more hospitals, dispensaries, baby welfare centers, leprosariums, etc.

Doctors, nurses, teachers, as well as young girls without any special training, who feel called to devote their lives to foreign missionary work, would find ample scope for their zeal among the Africans.

The White Sisters receive their religious training and pronounce their vows in this country before leaving for the missions.

Any young girl who would like to become a White Sister, and thus attain her personal sanctification through active work for the evangelization of Africa, may apply to

Mother Superior
White Sisters' Novitiate
R. R. 2, Belleville, Illinois

"When we leave anything for God He rewards us a hundred fold. He has said so Himself."

—Bl. Theophane Venzard.



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THE MESSENGER OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA is edited and published bi-monthly with ecclesiastical approbation by the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters), Metuchen, New Jersey. Annual subscription \$1.00. Entered as second class matter December 15, 1931, at the post office of Metuchen, New Jersey, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Sacrifice Joy

Sr. Mary of Peace returns from the Missions

Sr. M. Irena returns to the missions

Sr. Mary of Peace (Joanne Carroll of Belmont, Mass.) recently returned from Nyasaland where she was in charge of the school. She also visited the native villages to contact the Africans and tell them of the God who created them and died on the cross to save them.

In the following article Sister gives an account of these visits.

WOULD YOU LIKE ME to tell you about our trips to a pagan village that was reported hostile to the Christians? Accompanied by a native religious, as is customary on such occasions, or by some other responsible person, we wended our way along a rough, narrow path that wound around the hills. Sometimes it led to a pond or stream, presenting a real problem of how to get across. From time to time we would pass an abandoned hut which made one feel even more intensely the awful silence of the bushland.

After an hour's walk, we were able to get an occasional glimpse of a group of straw peaks in the distance. Nearing the village we noticed the children scuttling in every direction. We approached the nearest hut in front of which two women were sitting; but before we could say a word, they darted off and disappeared behind a door which was loudly slammed and bolted after them. It took but a moment for the place to become deserted . . . not a soul remained in sight.

We waited around for a while and soon we noticed a door here and there open, revealing a huddled group of forms peering from the darkness. It seemed hopeless that anything more could be accomplished on our first visit so we decided to leave, promising ourselves to return in the near future.

A week later we were back; but this time it seemed wise to let the people know of our presence in advance, because we were strangers to

them and they had been prejudiced against us. From a distance we called, "Odi, odi." (May we enter?) And we heard "Odini" (Come).

Entering the village, the first person we met was a woman seated before her hut crushing kernels of corn into flour. The baby tied to her back had been lulled to sleep by the steady rhythm of its mother leaning back and forth over the partly pulverized heap. The reception we received was hardly a warm one; nevertheless, it was not so icy as the one we had received the week before.

As we moved further into the village, the women slowly and with an air of suspicion left the shelter of their huts to come and kneel before us, according to the custom. We flashed our most gracious smiles so as to reassure them of our good will and overcome the fright they felt in our presence.

Local etiquette demands that they follow a rigid set of rules to greet a guest. It requires that one remain motionless and in perfect silence for a time before addressing the other. Then it is the host who speaks the first word and bids the guest welcome. In this they follow a fixed set of formalities. This same ceremony was repeated until each one had given her greeting and received an appropriate answer in response. Even if two friends, who had not seen each other for a long time, were by chance to meet; they would follow the same procedure. Custom demands that they remain silently facing the other for several minutes without showing the least sign of joy or surprise.

The children, as on the previous occasion, had fled at our approach; so that, none at all were to be seen. However, the braver ones, encouraged by the presence of their mothers, slowly edged their way into the group, clinging to their mothers for protection. Some were trembling like a leaf, since they had been taught that the white people ate negro children. It took quite some time before they were convinced of the falsity of the statement and overcame the horror they felt for all of white skin.

Our conversation on these occasions followed the trend of ordinary subjects. The women,



Arriving at a Distant Village

having a natural soft voice, were timid and spoke in even a more subdued tone. Our visits were cut short purposely so as not to become tiresome and maintain interest.

Then one day we broached the essential reason for our visits: "Do you know God?" The answer was hesitant and evasive.

"Who created you and all that you see?"

"Could a mere man do that?" we asked. They thought it would have to be God.

"Then this God is the Master of all men, of life, of death and of all things and worthy of our love. He is our Father and loves us and wants to give us His beautiful paradise, on condition that we observe His laws during our life on earth."

There was another question: "Do you know how to pray? It is easy. Just do like this." And we taught them to make the sign of the cross. They repeated it several times and we suggested that they pray every day: "My God I Love you, have mercy on me . . ."

This had been a great deal for one day, so we said it was time to leave. Almost in unison they answered, "We have had a good visit and you may leave now."

By the time we returned, they had forgotten all they had learned the week before, but it came to them more easily. The ten Commandments were not very readily accepted and we knew we would have to come back to them over and over again. It takes time, sometimes even years, but by force of repetition, and through the exercise of charity in their behalf,

the heart of the negro is softened and finally won over.

At every visit we would ask if there were any sick people in the village. This is the great concern of the missionary. It often happens that there is a dying baby to be baptized or an adult to be instructed on his deathbed.

Our weekly visits became a routine to which we adhered, even under the most difficult conditions. During the rainy season the area becomes so thick with vegetation that one has to cut through the underbrush to make a path. It often happens that we get caught in a torrential downpour. Even if we can find a shelter of some kind, after it has passed we must take to the road again which may have been turned into a swift, muddy stream, bordered with dripping foliage so that one gets soaked to the skin. But we consider this as nothing. For a missionary knows that God counts every step, every drop of sweat that the burning sun draws from his feverish skin, every discomfort and chill from his dripping clothes. It is the price that one willingly pays to purchase precious souls.

Several villages may be visited in a day when they are in the vicinity of the mission. Others, however, are too far distant and difficult to reach but a few times a year and these are visited during the vacation periods when the Sisters are free and may leave for a week at a time. Ordinarily, we are three in the group and make the trip on bicycle as we often travel 30 or 35 miles accompanied by porters to carry the baggage. We stop to teach catechism in all

the villages through which we pass, reaching as many as 40 on one trip.

These visits are of primary importance in missionwork. A visit at domicile from time to time stimulates good will and gives concrete evidence of the interest of the missionary in their behalf, which wins their confidence. We learn, too, of the particular problems in the various households, which are sometimes alleviated by only a word of sympathetic understanding. The spiritual and medical help we are able to give them always proves to be helpful.

The field for apostolic action in the pagan villages is as wide as the ocean. Since the native woman, for the most part, never leave their village, it is up to the missionary to go to her. Whenever a new mission is opened, the Sisters come in contact with thousands that have never heard the word of God spoken before. Because of their helpfulness and interest, the Sisters win the confidence of the natives. They encourage the sick to come to the mission dispensary where they are often cured of spiritual ills while being treated for those of the body.

It would be difficult to stress too strongly the importance of this field of missionary activity. Through it, the confidence and friendship of the native is gained, the children are drawn to the mission schools, those in danger of death often receive baptism, the sick are treated in body and soul and the general moral status of the people is raised to a higher level.

One must use tact in approaching the subject of religion to them. The native feels, and

rightly so, that if he seriously listens to what the missionary has to say, he will have to make an effort to change his easy sensual way of life. If he accepts the truths he has been taught, he must give up polygamy, immoral dances and the many other practices that even their pagan minds cannot justify. Nevertheless, little by little they cannot help but admit the truth of our holy religion and accept it. But how many more souls could be convinced and brought into the ONE FOLD if only there were more missionaries, priests, brothers and sisters!

* * * *

Speaking of her experiences in the heart of Africa, Sr. Mary of Peace claimed the grave dangers and discomforts of mission life are rapidly becoming things of the past. "There are just enough left to make our life meritorious and rather exciting. In any case we haven't much time to worry about ourselves. Our only concern is the natives, who are striving more and more to lift themselves out of their present degradation and who look so trustfully to us to show them the way."

Sr. Mary of Peace was assigned to replace Sr. M. Irena (Theresa Gemme of Worcester, Mass.) at our Novitiate in Belleville, Ill., where she is now aiding in the formation of future missionaries.

Sister remarked it was a great sacrifice for her to leave her mission. Her sacrifice gave to Sr. Irena the joy of returning to Africa where she is now in charge of the school at Lukuni, Nyasaland.

Sister Irena
and her
Teaching Staff
of Our
Lady's School,
Lukuni



BEING A MISSIONARY

"**W**OE UNTO ME if I do not preach the gospel" cried the great apostle: and since his time, and through all ages, it is the identical cry that is being wrung from all those whose hearts have been wounded by the same love.

This is the cause that one becomes a Missionary. If there are different degrees in its realization . . . from the first step of a young girl across the threshold of the Postulate, to that of another Issac Jogues who, after being mutilated, returned to the martyrdom of which he had already tasted . . . the gift is the same. In both cases, there has been contact with the spark of Divine Love, and a fire enkindled which will never be extinguished.

Being a Missionary means sacrificing one's own heart . . . to be a fool of the same folly that induced the Son of God to leave the bosom of His Heavenly Father and come down to us.

Being a Missionary is to imitate His Divine exile; to know the exquisite sweetness of praying to God where He had never before been adored "in spirit and in truth;" to offer Him in the awful silence of the desert or the frozen wastelands, where there had never before been a tabernacle or a loving heart to praise Him in His creation; to be the connecting link that opens a torrent of graces on a dry and fruitless soil. It is to be another precursor, crying like St. John the Baptist, "Behold Him who is to come" to those who are seeking and towards Whom all events and hearts tend.

Being a Missionary is to teach strange peoples in far away places, often in a climate which drains all vitality and demands the sacrifice of one's health. It is to suffer from the surroundings, to endure fatigues, privations, but to count it all as nothing in comparison to the suffering caused the Heavenly Father by the loss of souls or the neglect of graces.

It is to give with open hands in abundance, "Not recoiling before any sacrifice, even death, to contribute to the extension of the reign of God on earth" as the great Cardinal Lavigerie demanded of his children in their constitutions . . . This is what it means to be a Missionary. In other words, they are never to despair in the face of difficulty, to yield to others, to begin many works but not necessarily to see their accomplishment, to toil unto death solely and purely for love of God.

Being a Missionary is to bind repulsive wounds, to teach those whose heads are often



**Rev. Mother Louise Marie, Superior General
of the White Sisters**

dense and slow to assimilate the truths which seem self evident. But it is to know, too, the joy of sowing a grain of hope where there is despair, of reconciliation where there was hatred; being at all times the personification of the goodness of our common Father.

It is to accept with equal determination the tasks that are unappreciated, obscure, dangerous, as those which are to one's liking. It is to subject one's self to the endless task of learning new and sometimes fantastic languages. What is still more difficult is to learn the customs, beliefs and traditions of the various tribes in the hopes of being able "to exploit some grain of truth that will lead progressively to the fullness of light."

And one accomplishes all this with the firm conviction of one's nothingness and insufficiency, announcing the Eternal Light with the same unassuming modesty that the tiny flicker of the sanctuary light makes known the Real Presence in the tabernacle.

Thus the least little Sister working in the kitchen according to her ability and the dictates of obedience is a Missionary, even though others and not she will depart on the missionary journey she had always dreamed of making. She is a Missionary, too, the Superior seated at her desk, planning, seeking and applying

(Please turn to page 13)

"If Thou Wilt"

Dedicated to Our Future White Sisters

"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; then come follow Me."

(St. Matt. XIX, 21)

THESE WORDS TO THE RICH young man express the call of a soul to the religious life. To each of you, White Sisters of tomorrow, the same Master repeats this call.

A White Sister is a Missionary, but she is first of all and essentially a RELIGIOUS. Do you fully comprehend the meaning of the word RELIGIOUS?

Are there not certain ones among you who close your eyes to this prospect, saying to yourselves: "I shall be first and foremost a MISSIONARY"? Though these two expressions are more or less exclusive, yet they must be united, inseparable as are the two commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor. In this there is often more than a mere mistaken notion of words; there is a lamentable misunderstanding. That is why, White Sisters of tomorrow, we wish to assert that you must be first of all a RELIGIOUS.

It seems in general aspirants give a very small place to the religious aspect in their ideal. They see first the search of pagan souls in the jungles and their conversion. They do not think, that as a foundation, personal holiness is necessary; or at least they think that one must be a saint, but that is the work of God. The religious side is all very well, but one is a missionary first. One is a missionary or one is a religious in the cloister.

They wish to be missionaries, to catechize, to nurse the sick, to care for the lepers, to make visits of charity and long journeys by caravan, to sleep under a tent, to learn new languages, etc. Such is the missionary life dreamed of by many.

To win souls to Christ, to spread the Kingdom of His love, comes very often before the desire to give one's soul entirely to Christ, to adore Him in truth and to love Jesus alone. This ideal is indeed stamped in the very heart of the dream, but so feebly!

Some think that success in the Apostolate depends more on talents than on union with God; or to be a religious missionary, it is sufficient to consecrate oneself to work among the pagans. They do not know that the religious state is the means of sanctifying themselves, because better than anything else, it

favors union with God; a union that is indispensable for the real Apostle.

The call of God is heard in its fullest sense by a minority. Happy are these privileged souls! They understand at once the "gift of God." And this gift is ineffable.

"It is I who have chosen you," says the Master. Oh! without a doubt He indeed says: "If thou wilt," but before pronouncing these words. He has "looked and loved." Choice of a God . . . the inestimable privilege, an honor almost to be feared, joy of a whole life!

The answering gesture is that of two hands placed in His for a complete surrender of her being and of her every action. It is a consecration, a consecration added to that already solemn one of Baptism. It surpasses all the others. It is not the private act of giving which so many others formulate within the intimacy of prayer. It is an official act which depends upon the Church. Only that soul will be a religious whose consecration has been approved by the Church, and rendered by Her eternal.

In the eyes of the Church, RELIGIOUS are the well-beloved children. Though the world may not esteem them, the Church surrounds them with honor and respect, watches over their life with loving solicitude. It is the august authority of the Church which approves and prescribes the Constitution, all that is included in the term "the Rule," which determines in the smallest details as well as in the important events of life, all the obligations of the RELIGIOUS.

But the consecration must be lived. He who chooses her proposes the evangelical counsels—which will be added to the Commandments of God and of the Church.

"If thou wilt be perfect . . .

"Go sell what thou hast" . . . That is Poverty.

"Then come . . . (and belong to me alone. Thou shalt have no other love but Me.) That is Chastity.

"And follow Me." (In the path that leads to Calvary.) That is Obedience until death.

And it is the joy of the soul to say again and again throughout life by the observance of her three vows: "For love of Him I have given up all . . . to gain Him, the Christ. I do always the things that please Him."

Then, because she loves, "more than the rest," because in her Christ lives, and she in Him, she will bear abundant fruit, fruit of souls won for Christ.

In the measure in which the soul lives her

religious consecration, in that same measure will she accomplish Apostolic works. To the degree of her love, corresponds the degree of her zeal.

"Who loves not, has no zeal, for zeal is the perfection of love."
(Cardinal Lavigerie.)

The "Si vis" thus understood does not reach all aspirants. Naturally, one leaving the world has still much to discover in the field of religious life. On the other hand, God acts Himself on souls. He has His ways and times. If He knows how to inspire many with the attraction of a life of perfect union with Him, He waits for the opportunity to win others by the attraction of souls to be saved. To these He will reveal Himself little by little. They will understand then all that He is, He the Savior, and their love for souls will grow all the more.

But how desirable it is that every aspirant should esteem highly the religious life to which God destines her! She would have to believe that there is an immense difference between being a religious and not being a religious. Believe that without holiness there is no fruitful apostolate. Believe that the religious life is eminently favorable for this indispensable holiness.

However, there are aspirants who are eager for an intense interior life, for union with God. Their questions bear witness to it:

"How does your Congregation combine the needs of the interior life with the works of an active life? . . . What part of the day is given to exercises of piety? . . . On the missions shall I be in danger of lacking spiritual help?"

These anxieties reveal an exact idea of the apostolate. But how can one ardently desire union with God and not return thanks for the religious vocation, which will realize better than

anything else, perfect union? . . .
natural fruitfulness in good works.

The Missionary Magazines and fi
strive above all to show the exterior l
are sometimes incomplete. They may
the case of the young who are not
experience of this young White Sister

"If I had not understood that ever

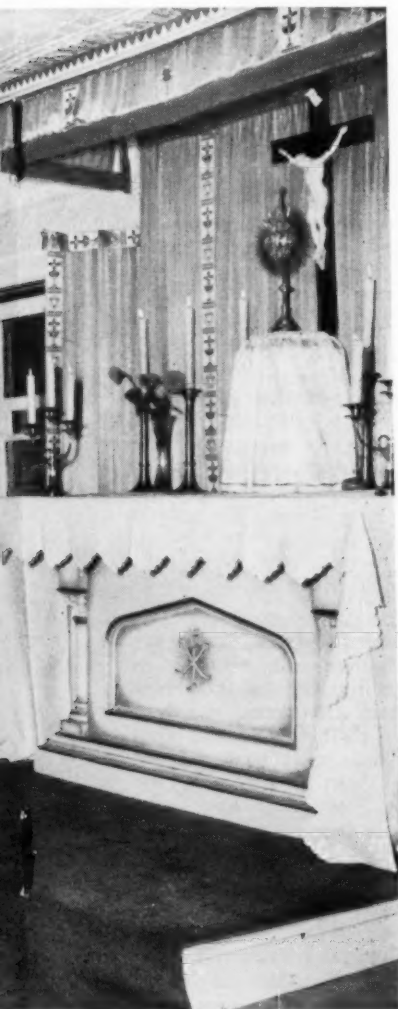


*While the White Sister kneels at
fills her heart with consuming love
courage to fulfill her A*

. . . then of a necessity, super-works.

and films, because they generally terior life of the apostolic workers, they may lead to a mistaken idea in re not informed. All have not the ite Sister who declared:

at every work to be fruitful, must



feels at His feet, the Divine Master
ing love, ardent zeal and undaunted
all her Apostolic Labors.

be based on an intense supernatural life, I would not have felt the need of seeking something more than the works with which I was surrounded and which, humanly speaking, had everything necessary for success. I believe every aspirant who is "busy about many things" must one day feel the emptiness of this absorbing work to which certain results give a glamor, but which most of the time remains much too human and without a deep foundation. It is very often this feeling which makes her aspire to the religious life first in order to be a missionary later."

Is this not to declare that the intense pleasure of doing charitable works, the need . . . otherwise very praiseworthy . . . of doing something with one's life, of giving oneself completely to the neighbor, can be very far removed from the prospect of a RELIGIOUS; namely to give oneself to God?

We shall not seek the causes which allow that "beautiful pearl" for which we sell all to pass by unnoticed. Are not all the causes reduced to that spirit of the world, forever opposed to the spirit of the Gospel?

In our day basic principles are being shaken, shameful doctrines are being instilled and in this environment from which it is well-nigh impossible to extricate oneself, certain ideals are being lost. All this does not prepare souls for perfect Obedience, for glowing Purity, for generous and heroic Poverty.

Charitable works, fortunately many, which endeavor to renew the Christian spirit are in that very way forming religious souls for the future. May the peerless Virgin enlighten them. Mary! All stainless and obedient, offered to her God, become her Son, a perfect worship, followed Him in privation from Bethlehem to Golgotha, and by the complete oblation of herself became Co-Redemptress.

"Lead us ever onward, Virgin Immaculate."





Being Initiated in Medical Works....

SAINT

AND FINALLY, after the voyage we will reach St. Mary's.

In these or similar words, each newly professed White Sister spoke to her family and friends gathered together before the last good-byes which, for an unlimited length of time, would separate them.

"St. Mary's" . . . Probably the young Sister's eyes became dreamy with a wistful look for these two words evoked a whole train of ideas about the complementary year of Missionary formation she would receive at St. Mary's before beginning her missionary career.

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa being international, and devoted exclusively to the African Missions, it is necessary that there be a fusion of the members of different nationalities; so that, they remain truly CATHOLIC, and above all questions of nationalism. They must also have an identical contact with Africa and the natives which will give to their apostolate the same zeal and devotedness. Coming from all over the world, the White Sisters form a real League of Nations, all of whom have but one purpose in mind: the extension of the reign of our Lord.

The great vitality of the Congregation is probably due to this infusion of new blood constantly going on inside it; for by mixing the different cultures and characters of nations, the very best result is obtained. The complementary year of training at St. Mary's is the laboratory where this fusion is carried on. The emblem of the community is a bright, burning flame which is fed by logs representing the contribution of the different nations. The more nationalities there are, the higher the flame jumps.

Let us visit the happy family during this year of joy and catholicity, where all nations unite not only in prayer and work, but also in laughter and friendship; this year which builds characters strong enough to stand the strain of a life dedicated all to God, serving Him

anywhere, in any way that He might desire. It is here that the young Sisters learn how to be ready to give ever more, to serve one's neighbor following the example the Master gave: "I have not come to be served, but to serve."

Because it prepares them for their future work, the Sisters like the different functions given to them during their stay at St. Mary's. They enjoy getting into direct contact with the natives, to get a taste of what a missionary's life really is. Every month the young Sisters are given a

MARY'S

new charge, either working directly with natives or for them. They also learn to cook, sew, mend, etc., under the guidance of an experienced Sister. In this way they will be ready to meet any unforeseen circumstances that might arise in their mission post.

Needless to say that although they accept with the same good spirit these home charges, they all prefer the time when they are called to active service in catechetical, medical or educational works.

One of the most desired positions is that of helper at the dispensary where the people come to have their pains and aches cared for. They come for medical help it is true, but often too, for the comforting words which the Sister always gives along with the remedy. Injections are very much in favor among them and they desire one for every ailment from a headache to a sore toe. But the Sister always profits of the occasion to inject a few words of moral. She must also listen patiently to the long tales of woe told by these poor women, but who appreciate hearing about God and His infinite Goodness.

At the dispensary or in the hospital the young Sisters very often have the happiness of sending to Heaven a dying baby or preparing an adult in danger of death for baptism. What bliss for the heart of a Missionary to snatch a soul from satan! These are missionary joys that nothing can equal. And what about the reward that God is preparing for those who put themselves at His disposal to help fill Heaven!

Another way of bringing Christ and His teachings to the people is through the schools and the workrooms. Whatever the children hear they repeat to their parents. The Sisters also visit the homes of their pupils. They thus come in close contact with the natives and find out their objections to our holy religion. In Northern Africa in the Arab centers, the Sisters' aim is not to make converts of them right away; but rather, to give them a Christian outlook. This method reaches natives of every social life condition.

However, it is not only the pupils' parents that are visited. Visits at domicile, in which the Sisters of St. Mary's take part, are made in all the villages in the vicinity of the Motherhouse. During these visits the young Sisters learn how the natives really live, their likes and dislikes and how they can best come to their assistance. In these visits the young Sisters lose many an illusion they had long nourished, but replace them with the true facts which are always better and give more pleasure when well

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.... Educational and Other Works



Here is where we are....

DURING OUR Novitiate days, Mother and the Sisters told us many stories of our beloved Motherhouse and St. Mary's. Our dream then was to see it in reality. On arriving at Algiers our attention was all taken up with the beauties of our new country and our hearts were full of joy in thinking that God had called us to serve Him in this land of Martyrs and Great Doctors of the Church. But in spite of the beautiful scenery we were most eager to catch our first glimpse of the Motherhouse. At last! We rounded the last curve in the road and there in front of us was the Sanatorium, of which we had also heard many stories. A few more toots of the horn and there we were at the door of the Motherhouse.

As we quickly jumped out of the car, we found our Mothers already there to welcome us! We were received with so much cordiality, we could not feel otherwise than at home. Then we were taken to visit our dear Lord. Flowers and Palm trees filled the cloister garden that led to the chapel; and I felt I was walking on Holy Ground, since Our Venerable Mother Salome and our founder Cardinal Lavigerie also walked here.

After we had tea, we were conducted to St. Mary's. There was quite a bit of excitement as we found ourselves surrounded by Sisters

Our American Sisters

and more Sisters. I thought I would find holes in my cheeks after having been kissed by fifty-five Sisters! I thought I would never learn their names, but that came in good time. At first, everything was rather frightening. St. Mary's is so much larger than the Novitiate, but we soon became accustomed to it.

Shortly after our arrival we made a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Africa, which is situated high up on a mountain side overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Strange to say the Arabs have a great reverence for Our Blessed Mother. They often come with their families to pay a visit to LALLA MERIAM (Lady Mary) as they call her. After Mass we went to see the home of Cardinal Lavigerie which is also a place of pilgrimage for the White Sisters.

Our life at St. Mary's is similar to that of the Novitiate, with the exception that here we are initiated into the various works of our missions. Housekeeping, a bit of farming, the care of the chapel and sacristy, the making of the hosts that will be consecrated at Mass. Then there is the sewing and the making and mending of vestments, etc. During a month we are sent to one of the near by missions for some practical experience in the hospital, dispensary, school or workroom. We also go to visit the natives at domicile. And it is a great joy when we have an occasion to baptize a dying baby.

Is not the life of a Missionary and especially that of a White Sister full of joy and love of God and souls.

Sr. M. Joseph Andrew, W.S.

At last our dream has come true and we are in Africa, at St. Mary's! Certainly now, if never before, we begin to experience what a great blessing it is not only to be a Religious, but even more so to be a White Sister. Once one of the Sisters, when speaking of the Motherhouse, mentioned that here we experience a certain joy which makes us appreciate and love our Congregation and I find that it is indeed very true. Just exactly what causes this happiness is difficult to put into words. Perhaps it comes from the fact that we are so many Sisters, all coming from different countries, speaking different languages, having different ideas and customs; yet now all being marked with those certain habits, formed dur-

Write From Saint Mary's

ing the Novitiate, which makes us White Sisters. Or it may come from the fact that we see how willing the Sisters are to help one another, how grateful they are when you render them a service, how joyful at recreation, but still how recollected in time of silence.

It was very nice meeting so many of the Sisters of whom we had heard such interesting stories. Among them Sister Mary of the Presentation, who recently celebrated the 65th anniversary of her religious profession. We also met two Sisters who celebrated their Golden Jubilee. How happy these Sisters are, to see so many young ones come to reap the harvest which they have sown with so much difficulty in the early days of our dear Congregation.

Sr. Mary Grace, W.S.

A CELEBRATION

One Sunday afternoon twelve young Sisters of St. Mary's, among whom I had the pleasure of being, left in the mission lorry for the Attafs, in the Cheliff Plaine to assist at the 75th anniversary of St. Elizabeth's Hospital or BIT ALLAH (God's House) as the Arabs named it. St. Elizabeth's, the first of the White Sisters' 48 hospitals, was inaugurated by our Founder, Cardinal Lavignerie.

It was also the 50th anniversary of the beautiful little chapel called Our Lady of Cheliff, a votive offering of Mother Salome, our first Superior General, in thanksgiving for the special protection of Our Blessed Mother over the cradle of our Congregation.

The day was most beautiful with the sun shining as brightly as ever and the scenery along the way simply too gorgeous for words to describe adequately. The mountains were dotted with trees gracefully swaying in the soft African breeze, and the fields were a golden brown, since it was the time of the harvest.

About five o'clock we stopped in a little valley surrounded on three sides by towering mountains. It was just like a park. Reverend Mother and our other Mothers, who were travelling in another lorry, arrived first but they waited for us in order that we might all be together to take a little lunch. After about fifteen minutes, we quickly climbed back into the lorry and continued our journey. About two hours later, we finally arrived at destination just as the sun was setting . . . a picture I think no artist, no matter how talented he be, could ever reproduce. We were all enraptured

with eyes fixed on the blazing red sun when someone cried, "Sisters, we have arrived."

As we drove up the long driveway overshadowed by huge palm trees and gardens filled with flowers of all sizes, shapes and colors, my mind wandered back to America. I thought of all our kind benefactors and friends who have so generously aided in the development of our missions. Then I whispered a little prayer that our dear Lord might in His infinite goodness bless in a particular way each and everyone of them.

When we had removed all our baggage from the lorry and washed our hands, we had a picnic supper on an open terrace beneath the starlit sky and a warm breeze. Immediately afterwards forty-five Sisters, each with a lighted candle, went in procession from the hospital to the chapel of Our Lady of Cheliff, which is situated at about five minutes' walk from St. Elizabeth's. During the procession hymns were sung in honor of Our Heavenly Mother; and on arriving at the chapel, Reverend Mother led us in the renewal of our consecration to Our Lady of Africa. Then we all sang the MAGNIFICAT in thanksgiving for all the graces and blessings bestowed on our Congregation

Here is where we hope to be....



as well as on ourselves. On returning we stopped before the statue of Our Lady of Cheliff in front of the hospital and there sang an AVE MARIA. Night prayers followed and then off to bed in an "open air dormitory" on the flat roof of the laundry.

The next morning an early Mass was said in the Hospital chapel during which the children from the Orphanage sang and prayed. It was most edifying to see and hear these little ones sing not only with their lips, but with their whole heart. Later on we attended a High Mass that was sung by Father Watier, a White Father, who gave an eloquent sermon and congratulated the Sisters on the wonderful work they had accomplished during these 75 years and are continuing to do. In caring for the body many souls have been brought into the One Fold and many others found their way to Heaven on being baptized at the hour of death.

After Mass, we had the privilege of witnessing the baptism of a baby girl who had been left at the hospital. She was about 18 months old and dressed in white. She received the name of Mary Magdalen. In the afternoon she was brought to Benediction and helped with the singing, even doing more than her share. When the Sisters stopped, she continued her solo of la -a-a, and if anyone dared to smile, she thought it was a compliment and sang still louder.

In the afternoon we visited the hospital, the maternity, the orphanage and the home for the aged. At five o'clock we gave a puppet show for the children, the old people, the Sisters and all those who desired to come.

After supper, we gave a little play for Reverend Mother and all the Sisters. It was based on the foundation of the hospital, each Sister representing the seven pillars; for example,



St. Elizabeth's Hospital

there was the pillar of Faith, Hope, Charity, Joy, Goodness, Poverty and Obedience. After the hospital was completed an Arab woman made her way there and the Sisters received her with open arms which was just the beginning. Then followed a number of difficulties and at last the great joy of seeing the hospital full of patients, many baptisms; and as a result the growing up of a Christian village.

Sister Philippine Marie and myself, the two violinists of St. Mary's furnished all the music, even imitating the desert wind, or at least trying to do so. Thus ended this wonderful day, which every one enjoyed. It shall ever remain for me the highlight of my missionary career. Thanks to my violin, which won for me the opportunity of assisting at this celebration.

Sr. M. Elizabeth Anne, W.S.

SAINT MARY'S

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understood. They learn and realize better the abyss separating us from the natives and the great tact necessary to bridge it.

During the summer months, when the courses are interrupted the Sisters are sent to the different missions for a month. On returning to their home life at St. Mary's the recreations are always full of life as each one tells her experiences and recalls her impressions. Singing also has an important part in the recreations, and the songs of many countries are sung. Often, too, the different languages unite in the one song of praise to God for having chosen

them. The knowledge of the one is shared with the other in a real sisterly spirit.

These young Sisters knew the life they had chosen would not always be an easy one. If during their complementary year of training, they have tasted its joys; they have also experienced its hardships and difficulties. Then too, the sorrow of a Missionary was felt in seeing the harvest ready but not sufficient laborers. The sight of this overwhelming task incites them to give ever more; it spurs them on to sacrifice their entire lives for the conversion of souls. They want to do their best to fill the gaps in the ranks, fervently beseeching our Lord to send reinforcements to help them.

Sister Louis de Monfort, W.S.

All Can Become Missionaries ... Even a Doll!

MARIE LOUISE was a beautiful double-jointed doll, with fair curls, blue eyes, dimpled cheeks and little white teeth.

One day after a catechism lesson, the Sister opened the box in which Marie Louise had arrived at the mission. When the little bush children saw what came out, they ran to the door screaming! They had never seen a doll or any white child before. As they ran, some looked back lest the strange creature should be following them. When they saw that the Sister was laughing, while the "white child" did nothing but smile, they regained courage. One by one they ventured to come near. First one curly head approached, then another, and another, until the classroom was full once more, full of children who stared at Marie Louise with wide open eyes and mouth. Like all children these little ones from the African bush were curious and the Sister assured them that the "white child" would do them no harm. One little girl put out her hand to touch the doll, drawing it back quickly as though Marie Louise were red hot. Gradually they all got over their fright. Everyone wanted to touch this new treasure.

Then the Sister showed them all that Marie Louise could do. She moved her arms, made her kneel down and nod her head. All this delighted the children. Sister then made Marie Louise stand up and walk towards them. But this was too unexpected, and once more the children made for the door. So Marie Louise was put back in her box until another day.

There was no wireless in the country, no cars or buses, not even any people who wrote letters. Yet, in next to no time, everyone in the district knew about the "white child" and visitors came each day to see her. Even the Chief came to make her acquaintance. All kinds of questions were asked: "Does she eat?" "Does she go to sleep?" "Has she got a soul?" . . . So hard was it for them to understand what a doll really was.

And although Marie Louise became very shabby as time passed, she was for months a great favorite at the Mission. Through coming to look at Marie Louise, many pagans got to know the Sisters, to hear about our holy religion and, eventually, to become Catholics. And that is how a doll can do missionary work!

St. St. Denis, W.S.

"The work of the Foreign Missions surpasses every other work of Christian Charity as far as the soul surpasses the body, as far as heaven surpasses earth."

— Pius XI, *The Pope of the Missions*

Being A Missionary

(Concluded from page 4)

measures where the most good is to be accomplished . . . and encouraging by word or letter those "laboring in the heat of the day" in the places she remembers with nostalgia and where she would rather be.

Being a Missionary is to sigh for the baptism of blood which one would gladly suffer in union with Christ, even if it be preceded by the painful agony of humiliation and unknown to all except Him . . . This is the strength of God made manifest in weakness.

It is to give, sacrifice, to be emptied of one's self to the point of total oblation, completed in the manner and place chosen by God, Himself; and to whisper with Him then: "Consummatum est."

It is to desire, with St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, no rest, even in heaven, until the number of elect be complete. From the fulness of joy to the depths of purifying expiation, it is to work without ceasing to obtain strength for the weak, hope for the desperate until the work of Redemption be accomplished.

When finally time will be no more, and the body and soul which had labored and suffered so long will be reunited, it will find in the ceaseless participation in the life and love of the Most Holy Trinity, an overwhelming hunger to give love for love by proclaiming in the company of the elect an eternal: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY.

Sr. Pauline Marie.

OBITUARY

Mr. Charles Bailey, Jersey City, N. J.
Mary Denithorn, Port-au-Peck, N. J.
Mr. Charles Nohe, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Mary Hodge, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Mr. John Kelley, Jersey City, N. J.
Mr. Julius G. Weese, Joliet, Ill.



"The harvest indeed is abundant, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest."

ST. MATTHEW 9 : 37 - 38

